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ABSTRACT

This paper describes implementation of a transition program which resulted in the successful movement of eight young mentally retarded adults from a segregated residential setting to a supervised apartment program in the community. The youth and their families visited the apartments and jointly made the decision to participate in the program. They selected their own rooms and roommates. Training occurred prior to the move in the actual apartments and community in which they would live and work. Training included: safety issues; self-protection; location of the supermarket; public transportation; the nearest pizza shop; cooking; menu planning; and budgeting. Evaluation of the program found significantly improved adaptive behavior skills after the move and decreased maladaptive behavior. Changes in parent attitudes about such issues as safety, the physical facilities, and food are reported as are parents' changed judgments regarding their child's level of independence and social relationships. In general, parents were pleased about the move into the community. Interviews with the young adults themselves also indicated general satisfaction with the program, level of independence, and social relationships. (DB)

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THE IMPACT OF TRANSITION FROM A CAMPUS RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM TO A COMMUNITY-BASED SUPERVISED APARTMENT PROGRAM FOR YOUTH

This Bancroft Community Transition Research Project began in May of 1989 with preparations for eight young adults to move off the Haddonfield campus to a supervised apartment program, in the community, in Maple Shade, New Jersey.

Bancroft is a private, non-profit organization which serves over 400 individuals with special needs from age five years and up. The overall facility is multi-faceted with campuses in Haddonfield and Mullica Hill, New Jersey and Owl's Head, Maine. In addition to the residential campus facilities, Bancroft serves over 80 people in community-based programs throughout South Jersey. We also provide the following services: an Evaluation and Treatment Center, Bancroft Neuro - Neuropsychological Evaluation Unit and Rehabilitation Options, speech, language therapy, psychological/ psychiatric services, physical/occupational therapy, recreational therapy, plus an Autism Program for children and one for adults, parent training, vocational training, plus supportive and competitive employment options.

Over 50 percent of the Board of Trustees is comprised of parents and two associate members of individuals served at Bancroft.

The youth and their families visited the apartments and jointly made the decision to participate in the program. The young adults selected their own rooms and roommates (two young adults to each apartment). The bureaus and walls were decorated with individual interests and taste in mind, i.e., "New Kids on the Block" posters, various sport posters, family photographs, stuffed animals, and posters of rock musicians.

The youth continued to participate in school, at Bancroft, and employment in the community as close to where they were living as possible. Training for youngsters and staff occurred prior to the actual move in July, 1989. The training occurred in the apartments, in the community, the actual environments in which they would live and work. This was important because the training was not simulated, but utilized the actual ecological setting, and thus, fostered learning and retention of that learning.

In addition to the many initial and ongoing learning experiences which the youth had as well as those inevitable housekeeping chores, the training includes the following: safety issues, self-protection, the location of the supermarket, public transportation, the nearest pizza shop, how to cook, menu planning, budgeting, how to operate the elevator and the TV monitor security system, and how not to give your telephone number to a total stranger in the apartment lobby.

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This was an opportunity for us, at Bancroft, to examine the impact of the move into the Community Living Program on the lives of the youngsters and their families and to examine student growth along certain skill areas.

In addition, we hoped that the Community Transition Research Project would further corroborate the findings of other researchers and practitioners regarding the advantages of community integration for this population. Research has demonstrated that functional living skills develop better in a community or natural setting, rather than in a residential facility or institution because learning is an interactive process between the individual and his/her environment. Training and living in the community offer an environment rich in stimulation and experience, one which can enrich an individual's life and offer more opportunities for the expression of an individual's skills, talents, and abilities. The research would also provide us with indices as to how well the program was doing, and in fact, was it accomplishing what it set out to accomplish.

PROJECT DESIGN

We used a multiple measure approach that made use of objective and subjective measures of program effectiveness. Objective measures included data from an independent site review and the inventory for Client and Agency Planning (ICAP). Subjective measures included data from parent and young adult interviews.

An independent site reviewer conducted the site reviews of both the campus facility and the Community Apartment Program utilizing the Temple University Developmental Disabilities Center Site Review Survey. The reviewer evaluated both environments and rated them with respect to physical quality features such as cleanliness, lighting, attractiveness, and normalization. The normalization ratings include such areas as age appropriate possessions, individual rights, individualization, social/integrative activities, staff attitude toward individuals, and descriptive language.

The Inventory for Client and Community Planning (ICAP), a standardized assessment tool, was administered to all eight young adults prior to the move (premove evaluation) and six months following the relocation into the community. The ICAP was chosen because it systematically measured the expression of adaptive and maladaptive behaviors and was normed with respect to a normal population.

Parents and young adults were interviewed, before the move (premove evaluation) and six months following the relocation (postmove) for the purpose of comparison. The interviews were conducted to determine parent and young adult perceptions concerning environmental issues, i.e., safety, quality, physical appearance, behavioral issues, level of community integration and independence, and social and family relationships.

RESULTS

SITE REVIEW:

The results of the site review can be summarized quickly. Although the campus facility and the community facility did not differ with respect to physical quality ratings, they did differ with respect to normalization ratings. Normalization ratings were significantly higher in the community facility than in the campus facility ($p > .01$).

THE ICAP:

Adaptive behavior skills were evaluated in five broad domains: Motor Skills, Social/Communication Skills, Personal Living Skills, Community Living Skills, and Broad Independence (compositive measure). Each student then had five ICAP scores for adaptive behavior. The scale is designed so that a score of 100 means the student is performing with the average for his/her age group. Scores above 100 and below 100 mean the student is performing above and below their age group respectively.

The median ICAP scores for pre and postmove evaluations of adaptive behavior are presented in Table 1. Recall that the median is the point in the distribution that 50% of the scores fall above and 50% of the scores fall below. Consider motor skills where the median score for our eight students was 53.50 before the move. This means that four out of eight scores fell above 53.50 and four out of eight scores fell below 53.50.

The results were striking. First, note that the ICAP scores were well below 100 during the premove evaluation. All of our students were performing below their respective age groups. Note also that the postmove scores were significantly higher than the premove and much closer to 100.

Table 1

Adaptive Behavior Skills: Median Standard ICAP Scores for Pre and Post Move Evaluations

	Time of Evaluation	
Domain	Pre Move	Post Move
Motor Skills	53.50	97.50 **
Social/Communication Skills	59.00	71.00 **
Personal Living Skills	70.50	96.00 **
Community Living Skills	47.50	72.50 **
Broad Independence[a]	39.50	69.00 **

Note. Range of scores <1 to 198.

[a] Composite measure.

** $p < .01$, two-tailed.

It is important to note that with this particular design, we evaluated the expression, not necessarily the acquisition of motor skills. Perhaps it is the case that students were always capable of performing many of the skills on the ICAP (e.g., using a knife to carve a roast), but because of the setting, they were unable to express those skills. The result would be exactly what we found, relatively low scores before the move and high scores after the move. Nonetheless, it has been argued that an increase in the expression of skills is meaningful and a positive consequence of community integration.

In addition to evaluating adaptive behavior, the ICAP also looked at maladaptive behavior. The process begins by assessing the frequency and severity of problem behavior in eight broad categories: hurtful to self, hurtful to others, destructive to property, disruptive behavior, unusual or repetitive habits, socially offensive behavior, withdrawal or inattentive behavior, and uncooperative behavior. These are combined to yield four maladaptive indexes:

Internalized	- hurtful to self, unusual or repetitive habits, withdrawal or inattentive behavior
Asocial	- socially offensive behavior, uncooperative behavior
Externalized	- hurtful to others, destructive to property and disruptive behavior
General Maladaptive	- combination of all eight problem behaviors.

The median ICAP scores for pre and postmove evaluations of maladaptive behavior are presented in Table 2. Note that the scores were negative. In general, the lower the score, the more serious the maladaptive behavior. At the premove evaluation, all median values except one, the internalized domain, were within normal range. At the postmove evaluation, all median values were within normal range; the internalized maladaptive index showed a significant increase from pre to postmove evaluation.

After six months of community living, students were expressing skills that they were not expressing prior to the move. Clearly, they were showing increased independence.

Table 2

Maladaptive Behavior Index: Median ICAP Scores for Pre and Post Move Evaluations

	Time of Evaluation	
Domain	Pre Move	Post Move
Internalized	-15.00	- 9.00 *
Asocial	- 6.00	- 1.50
Externalized	- 4.50	- 1.83
General[a]	- 8.00	- 5.50

Note. Index Value:

+10 to -10	Normal
-11 ti -20	Marginally Serious
-21 to -30	Moderately Serious
-31 to -40	Serious
-41 & Below	Very Serious

[a] Composite measure.

* $p < .05$, two-tailed.

PARENT INTERVIEWS:

The parent interview was designed to find out how parents perceived both the move and their children's increased independence. This telephone interview was designed to probe four general areas: overall support of the move, satisfaction with the setting, the child's level of independence and satisfaction with social relationships. For most questions, parents were asked to place judgments on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 was the lowest point and 10 the highest point on the scale. Results are reported for each question, but because of time constraints, only the major findings will be discussed.

To begin, overall support for the move was high for pre and post move interviews (see Table 3). Although parent's were moderately concerned, they did not allow their concern to affect support of the move.

At this point in the interview, we asked parents an open-ended question. We asked them what they believed was the major advantage and disadvantage of having their child move into the community. The most frequent advantage mentioned at the pre and post interview was "increased independence." The most frequent disadvantage differed for the pre and postmove interviews. Before the move, safety was the most frequent disadvantage mentioned. Parents feared that their children would be "taken advantage of." After the move, isolation became the most frequent disadvantage mentioned.

When asked "why" they believed their children were isolated, parents gave two explanations. The first was that their child called home more often. This was very interesting to us because what parents had failed to remember was that access to the phone was limited on campus, but was unlimited in the apartments. This alone could account for more frequent telephone calls.

The second explanation for why they believed their children were isolated came from the answer to a very simple question. Parents reported that when they asked their children what they had done all day, the most frequent response was "nothing." From our perspective, it seems unlikely that these young adults did "nothing" all day. Rather, it is more likely that their behavior is now typical of teenagers with acquired independence. For parents of teenagers, answers to certain questions are among the few things in life that are predictable. Perhaps you are familiar with a few of these: "Where have you been all day - nowhere," "What did you do - nothing," and "Who were you with - nobody."

Table 3

Parent Interview: Median Judgments of Overall Support for the Move for Pre and Post Move Evaluations

Question	Time of Evaluation	
	Pre Move	Post Move
How much do you support the move?	9.75	9.50
How concerned are you about the move?	4.00	4.00
How much does your concern affect support of the move?	2.00	1.50
How confident are you in your child's success in the CLTP?	8.00	7.50

Note. Scale ranged form 1 to 10.

We also asked parents about their satisfaction with the setting. (see Table 4). Satisfaction ratings for cleanliness and appearance were high ranging from 8 to 9.5 on both the pre and postmove interviews.

There was a significant change in only one area, and that was food. Parents gave significantly higher ratings of food on the postmove interview in comparison to the premove interview. When asked about their child's satisfaction, they also rated their child's satisfaction higher at the postmove interview. As you will see, food is one of the few areas that also showed significantly higher ratings of satisfaction on the young adult interview. This was gratifying to see since it has been argued that satisfaction with food is a good predictor of overall program satisfaction.

The third topic discussed in the interview(see Table 5) child's level of independence, also showed relatively few changes. Ratings of daily living skills (self-help, self-care, domestic) started out high and remained high on the postmove interview.

There were some concerns, but these were concerns that were common among parents of teenagers. For instance, one mother complained that her son's hair always stood up in the back (because he forgets to comb it), and another said that her daughter's hair was always in her face. Another mother complained about the way her daughter dressed. "She wears a lot of black, and can you believe that she cut holes in her jeans!" At the time of this interview, holey jeans were "in vogue."

There was one significant change which was in the area of leisure time management skills. Parents rated satisfaction with the kinds of activities their child did lower on the postmove interview. This is to be expected if parents believe their children "do nothing all day."

The last topic we discussed with parents was satisfaction with social relationships (see Table 6). Here we found an interesting inconsistency between parent and young adult interviews. When asked about the number of good friends parents thought their children had, they estimated a smaller number on the postmove interview in comparison to the premove interview. Again, this makes sense if parents are perceiving that their children are isolated. However, it is interesting that this is exactly opposite of what happened on the young adult interview. When the children of these same parents were asked about the number of good friends they had, they estimated a larger number on the postmove interview in comparison to the premove interview (see Table 7).

Table 4

Parent Interview: Median Judgments of Satisfaction with the Setting for Pre and Post Move Evaluations

Question	Time of Evaluation	
	Pre Move	Post Move
How concerned are you about safety in the new setting?	6.00	5.50
How much does your concern about safety affect your support of the move?	2.50	2.00
For the residence where your child currently resides, rate:		
the standards of cleanliness	8.00	8.50
physical appearance	9.00	9.25
the amount of space	9.00	8.50
the extent to which the facility allows your child to express his/own tastes or interests.	9.66	9.75
the food served to your child	6.00	7.50*
How satisfied do you think your child is with the food served to him/her?	6.50	7.83a

Note. Scale ranged from 1 to 10.

a approaching significance $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

Table 5

Parent Interview: Median Judgments Of Child's Level of Independence for Pre and Post Move Evaluations

Question	Time of Evaluation Pre Move	Post Move
Rate your child's ability in the area of:		
hygiene (e.g, bathing, brushing teeth)	9.17	9.50
personal care/appearance (e.g., dressing, self, picking clothes)	8.00	7.50
housekeeping (e.g., laundry, making bed)	8.00	7.83
How satisfied are you with the kinds of activities that your child does outside of school and work?	8.50	7.00*
How satisfied are you with the range or variety of activities that your child does outside of schoo and work?	8.50	5.50
How satisfied do you think your child is with what he/she does outside of school?	7.16	5.50
Rate your child's ability to make choices for him/herself?	8.50	7.50
How often does your child:		
choose what he/she does outside of school or work?	7.50	7.50
choose what he/she will eat?	8.00	8.50
use community resources without support?	1.83	1.00
socialize with other nonhandicapped people?	4.00	3.50

Note: Scale ranged from 1 to 10.

*$p < .05$

Table 6

Parent Interview: Median Judgments of Satisfaction with Social Relationships for Pre and Post Move

Question	Time of Evaluation	
	Pre Move	Post Move
How many good friends do you think your child has?	4.00	3.00
How satisfied are you with the relationship you have with your child?	9.50	9.00
How comfortable are you with your child's behavior in public? (e.g., a restaurant)	9.16	8.50
How comfortable do you find other people are with your son/daughter?	8.50	7.50

Note: Scale ranged from 1 to 10.

[a] This was a close-ended question with ordered alternatives (like the student interview). Parents were given a choice of four alternatives that ranged from 1 (none) to 4 (more than 1).

In general, the parents were pleased about the move into the community. Although they were concerned, they supported the move and were satisfied with all aspects of the setting, and rated their children's ability to function in that setting high. However, parents did express some concern about isolation in the community.

YOUNG ADULT INTERVIEW:

The young adult interview was designed to find out how the young adults felt about the move. The face-to-face interview was designed to probe four areas: overall satisfaction with the move, satisfaction with the program, level of independence, and social relationships. For most questions, students were asked to place judgments on a three point scale where 1 was the lowest point and 3 was the highest point on the scale. Overall, satisfaction with the move was high (see Table 7). The students were significantly more satisfied with their living situation after their move into the community.

When asked about satisfaction with the program, the students gave us the same pattern as their parents. The only significant change in level of satisfaction was in the area of food. They were more satisfied with the food in the apartments than the food they received on-campus. Again, a reassuring indication of satisfaction with the program.

Level of functioning, the third topic discussed with students, showed little change from pre to postmove interviews. There was one skill that approached a significant change and that was in decision-making skills. In particular, the young adults reported that they chose what to eat more often in the apartments than on-campus. Another relatively big change, although not significant, was in how often they chose what to do in their free time. It appears that they choose what to do in their free time less often in the apartments than on-campus. Perhaps this is because they have more responsibilities in the community setting, i.e., cooking, maintaining an apartment, working in the community, school, etc.

Finally, in the area of social relationships, we see the change mentioned in the parent interview. When asked about how many good friends they had, the students estimated a larger number on the postmove interview in comparison to the premove interview. Again, this is exactly opposite of what their parents reported (see Table 6).

Table 7

Student Interview: Median Judgments of Satisfaction with Current Living Situation, Satisfaction with the Program, Level of Independence and Social Relationships for Pre and Post Move Evaluations

Area	Time of Evaluation Pre Move	Post Move
Satisfaction with Current Living Situation		
Do you like living here?	1.70	2.70*
Satisfaction with the Program		
Do you like the people who work here?	2.50	2.70
Are the people who work here mean or nice?	2.17	2.30
Do you like your day program?	2.83	2.70
Do you like the food here?	.67	2.70*
Let me check, did you say the food here is good or bad?	1.50	2.70*
Living Skills		
How often do you:		
Pick what clothes you will buy?	1.50	2.16
Pick what clothes you will wear?	3.00	3.00
Pick what you will do in your free time?	2.30	2.07
Pick what you will eat?	1.50	2.30
Pick how you will spend your money?	2.10	2.00
Pick a friend for free time?	2.00	2.17
Social Relationships		
Do you have any real good friends?	2.50	3.50[a]
How often do you have friends visit you?	1.83	1.92

Note: Alternatives ranged from 1 to 3.

[a] For this question, the alternatives ranged from 1 (none) to 4 (more than 1).

* $p < .05$.

SUMMARY

In summary, the data shows that there were large gains in the expression of skills when a group of eight young adults were placed into the greater community. Equally important is the fact that when asked about their living situation, these same eight adults reported that they liked living in the community better than living on-campus. Although there was some concerns, parents supported their move into the community.

From a research perspective, these data are important because they replicate those in the community integration literature and because they provide further justification of the program. In addition, and perhaps of most immediate importance, the research provided a concrete source of feedback and evaluation to the program. It was also able to assist in reassessment and program course corrections where necessary. For example, parents indicated that they were less satisfied with the kind of activities their child participated in within the community. Discussion with staff indicated that youth were very busy and involved in activities. The data suggested that although that might be true, parents perceived something different. It became clear to program staff that the means to provide more information to parents about the young adults' activities and the extent of their children's activities was necessary.

The findings of this Bancroft Community Transition Research Project support the literature regarding the importance of community living to foster and promote independence, decision making and functional skill acquisition for young adults with special needs.